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En Memoriam.



In Memoriam.

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REV. JOHN McVICKAR, S. T. D.

1868.



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MINUTES OF A MEETING

OF THE

CLERGY of the CITY of NEW YORK and its VICINITY,

CALLED by the Right Rev. the BISHOP of the DIOCESE "to express their feeling of reverence "for the Memory of the late Rev. Professor JOHN "McVICKAR, S.T.D., who, for a period of sixty years, "served in the Ministry of the Church in the Diocese "of New York, and at his decease was the Senior "Presbyter;" and held in Trinity Chapel Schoolhouse, on Friday, November 6th, A.D. 1868.

There were present :—

THE RIGHT REV. BISHOP POTTER,

The REV. DR. MORGAN,

" " HIGBIE,
" " JOHNSON,
" " DIX,
" " HAIGHT,
" " VINTON,
" " PRICE,
" " OGILBY,
" " HASKINS,
" " SEYMOUR,
" " GALLAUDET,

The REV. DR. GEER,

" " CORNWALL,
" " SWOPE,
" " HOLLINGSWORTH,
" MR. REED,
" " COFFEE,
" " WELLMAN,
" " WALKER,
" " FARRINGTON,
" " SILL,
" " HARISON,

THE REV. MR. HOLMES.

The BISHOP took the Chair, and opened the Meeting with prayer. ·

On Motion, the REV. MR. REED was made Secretary of the Meeting.

BISHOP POTTER having observed that, not wishing to speak at all at random on such an occasion, he had hastily prepared the substance of what he wished to say, thereupon proceeded to read as follows :—

DEAR BRETHREN—In calling this Meeting to afford an opportunity for offering some expression of our feelings of love and veneration for one who has so long held a foremost place in all our hearts, as in all the affairs of the Church in this Diocese, I have felt quite sure that I was acting in accordance with your earnest wishes. This is no mere formal meeting. It is called for by the warm, spontaneous impulse to unite in paying a tribute to departed worth.

At this stage of our proceedings I detain you with only one or two observations. The first thought that arises in the mind upon hearing of the departure of our venerated and beloved friend, is, that a marked man, a peculiar character, quite distinguished from ordinary men of his class, has been taken away from us; and that there is no one of anything like similar qualities and features left to take his place, or to re-

mind us of him. And the second thought is, that in hardly any other case would it be so difficult as it is in his to form a just estimate of the nature and extent of the influence that has been exerted by an individual.

It is by no means the man of bustling activity who, for a time, makes a conspicuous figure on the great stage of the world, or of the Church, that leaves the deepest and most lasting impression upon the system in which he lives, and moves, and has his being. Such deep and lasting impressions are much oftener derived from persons comparatively little seen or heard of in the thronged places of the world. They are made by the student, by the man of thought, and, above all, by the man whose mind is filled while his character is moulded by great pregnant, living principles—principles which, in the Church, guide to all right action, while they prompt to an instinctive exposure of all plausible unrealities and all perilous measures.

Dr. McVICKAR was singularly fitted by mental constitution and by education to be a Teacher of principles, and so to wield a powerful influence during his life, and to leave behind him the germs of a still more powerful influence to be continued after his death. When we consider that his Ministry extended through sixty years—a period which really covers nearly the

whole of our active Church history in this country—that he passed all that long period in the very centre of Church life and influence—that he was intimately associated with such men as the venerable Dr. BARD, the JAYS, the HOBARTS, the KINGS—that his mind had been carefully stored with the best of human knowledge—that he had severely sifted the philosophies of ancient and modern times, and made their choicest dicta as familiar as household words—that his views had been enlarged, and his culture liberalized, by foreign travel—that he had looked with a thoughtful eye into the constitution and working of the Church and State of our mother country—that by these means he had done for himself what Lord Bacon so much desired, “that poliitcal men of eminence” would do for themselves, enriched his mind with all good learning, and fixed his judgment firmly in great principles and comprehensive views before engaging in the activities of life ; when we consider that, thus furnished and prepared, he was for more than half a century a Teacher of youth—and that, everywhere, in College and in society, in the Pulpit and in the Lecture-room, in the Ecclesiastical Council and in the Committee, where he rendered so many and important services—that everywhere the habits of his mind led him to assert principles, to expose the false and maintain the

true, and to do so with singular clearness, and with most practical applications ; I say, when we consider all these things, (and it is not easy to consider them adequately,) we begin to comprehend what a vast and momentous influence he must have exerted in the course of all these years ; and what an impress for good he must have left upon the Church in this country, in the very crisis of its fate, when it was plastic and just taking form and life for long years to come.

Let us bless God for such a character, and for such a life. Let us cherish a grateful remembrance of his labours and of his virtues. Let us think often of his gentle and benignant old age—filled with love and with devotion—daily gaining more of the Spirit of Heaven as he drew nearer to it ; and let us make it our daily prayer, that our last days may be like his in spirit, if not in age.

The CHAIRMAN then called upon the REV. PROF. SEYMOUR for the reading of a Minute which he had been desired to draw up, and which he now read :—

Minute.

WE, the Clergy of the City of New York and the vicinity, who have assembled this day, at the request of our Bishop, to take appropriate action on the occasion of the decease of the venerable senior Presbyterian of this Diocese, the REV. JOHN McVICKAR, S.T.D., desire to record our deep sense of the loss which our Diocese and the Church at large have sustained in the withdrawal from earth of our departed Brother.

The Rev. Dr. McVICKAR belonged emphatically to the City of New York ; this was his native place ; here, with a brief exception, his years were passed, and here he went to rest. We feel, therefore, that we have a special claim to be permitted to testify our love and veneration for his memory and character. As we pass in review the many offices which he held, the numerous trusts which he administered, the various positions of responsibility and influence and usefulness which he filled, we rejoice to know that we possess in his life-work so rich a legacy of

steadfastness and fidelity to duty ; of strict integrity, and of great ability and varied culture consecrated with entire devotion to the cause of God's Kingdom. His eminent purity of heart and mind, his rare sagacity, his far reaching foresight, were qualities which conspicuously mark his character, and which were specially needed at the time in which he lived, when everything in Church and State was taking form and shape, and receiving its impress and stamp for the future. His years, lengthened out by God's blessing to more than fourscore, embrace the entire period of the history of our country as an organized government, and of our Communion as a separate branch of the Church Catholic. His influence for good in all the interests with which he was connected will be recognized and acknowledged with grateful emotions by all who will hereafter read the journals of our Convention, of which he was a member, the records of the Parishes where he ministered, of the College of which he was so long an honored Professor, and the various Institutions—Missionary, Educational and Eleemosynary—which he served as a Trustee. He found leisure, too, amid his many avocations to add no inconsiderable contributions to the stores of our American literature. But especially did the cause of Christian Education

enlist the enthusiastic devotion of his heart, and the best labors of his busy mind and hand. The fruits of his works in training the young follow him, in scores of pupils, who have risen to eminence in all the varied walks of life, and who will ever bless his memory for the salutary and wise lessons which they learned from his lips. In public life, our departed Brother was consistently firm and undeviating in his adherence to principle, but to none was he more kind and considerate than to those who differed from him in opinion. While we bless God for what he was in public life, we, who had the privilege of his friendship and knew him in his home and in society, feel that we have special cause for gratitude to God for his example as a conspicuous and beautiful illustration of the power of Christianity to invest private, social and domestic life with the charm of all that is pure in sentiment, refined in taste, elevated in tone, and sound in principle. He went to his rest as the light of All-Saints' was about to dawn upon the Church, and it seemed as though God would thus set His Seal to the truth that he was a good man, by leading us instinctively and suggestively to add to the number of those whom we remembered on that Festival—the name of JOHN McVICKAR.

Upon the conclusion of this Minute, the Rev. Dr. MORGAN, of S. Thomas' Church, arose, and moved that the Address of the Bishop, together with the Minute prepared by Prof. SEYMOUR—both of which he characterized as most fitting and admirable—be adopted by the assembled Clergy, as an expression of their feeling, and be transmitted to the bereaved family of the Deceased.

Dr. MORGAN added, as follows: Right Rev. Sir,—Before sitting down, I beg to say a word of one, with whom my personal relations were never very intimate, but whose public and official character always commanded my unqualified admiration. The venerable and venerated Presbyter—whose worth we so sadly recall to-day, with all his varied gifts and excellencies, his commanding influence and exalted position, was as simple as a child in his manner and intercourse with men, and especially with his Brethren. There was not a particle of assumption or ostentation about him. He was without pride of appearance, and eschewed, even to a marked degree, professional badges and whatever else might draw attention to his person. But, Sir, if my observation has correctly served me, the man never lived who, on all occasions, more completely vindicated his claims to respect and honor

than Dr. McVICKAR. He was dignity itself. Simplicity and suavity, combined with the highest intellectual and moral and social culture, gave that uniform charm to his manner with which we all have been familiar. The grace of undissembled Christian courtesy was his in a remarkable degree. It never, on any occasion, public or private, failed him, or fell short of the full demand. In speech and in bearing Dr. McVICKAR was a model of high-bred courtliness. In your Address, Sir, you allude, in a very beautiful and touching manner, to his "gentle and benignant old age." Words could not have been chosen which would more aptly describe the mellowness and serene cheerfulness of his closing years. He never lost his interest, hardly his alacrity, in current affairs and duties; and, to the last, was punctilious in matters involving the slightest social obligation. Some two or three years since, I had the honor to pay him a visit at his elegant country seat in the village of Irvington, on the Hudson. The day was sultry, and I should have been more than content to have listened to his rich and instructive conversation on the sheltered piazza. But, infirm as he was, he insisted that I should accompany him over the superb grounds which surrounded the house; taking me to every point which would give a more extended view of the

landscape, and discoursing with great animation upon the beauties and associations of the spot. Tottering with age and decrepitude, he, notwithstanding, discharged the duties of a host in such a way as to overwhelm me with a sense of his kindness and consideration, and I left him with an unmeasured respect. I deem it a great privilege, Sir, that I am allowed to pay this brief tribute to the honored dead, and to bear testimony, that while Dr. McVICKAR was eminent in several departments of life and useful labor, as Theologian, Professor, Counsellor and Church Legislator, he was, at the same time, and in the fullest meaning of the term, a finished Christian gentleman.

The REV. DR. DIX then rose and said :

I rise to second the Motion which has just been made by Dr. MORGAN ; and, in doing so, will, with your permission and that of the Clergy present, avail myself of the opportunity to express some of those personal feelings of respect and affection which I have long entertained for the venerable deceased. In particular, I desire to add my testimony to that just borne by Dr. HAIGHT, as to the very great benefit derived from Dr. McVICKAR's instructions in Columbia College. I left that institution with a distinct impression that I owed very much to him ; there was no Professor to whom

I felt under such obligations ; at least, there was none for whom I felt that peculiar kind of attachment and affectionate regard which he had inspired. I think that there was much of this appreciative feeling among my classmates ; it has never left me, nor have I ever changed my mind about it. The old note books on history, intellectual philosophy, and the English literature, are still most carefully preserved with grateful remembrance of the student life.

When I heard of Dr. McVICKAR's death, and that the funeral service would be performed in Trinity Chapel on the second day of this month, I felt great sorrow at the thought that I must be absent ; for I had to spend All-Saints' Day at Annandale. But it was with as great thankfulness that, on learning that the interment would take place at Hyde Park, I found myself able to be present and see the very last of all. As there is no one in this room who shared that privilege with me, it may interest you to hear some account of the closing scenes. As soon as it was known at Annandale that Dr. McVICKAR's body would be brought to Hyde Park, arrangements were made at Saint Stephen's College to attend the funeral ; the feeling being universal that no mark of respect which could possibly be paid should be omitted. On Monday, the 2nd inst., therefore, the Warden of S.

Stephen's, the Professors, and the Students, now upwards of sixty in number, together with Mr. BARD, myself, and other friends, went down to Hyde Park. The coffin, on its arrival by the train, was received by the members of the College, drawn up in double line, in their full academic dress: they then formed in procession and followed the hearse to Saint James' Church, of which Dr. McVICKAR was Rector long ago. The full service was said in the Church, to the end of the lesson, the Students chanting the anthem and the hymn, "*Jesus, Saviour of my soul!*" and we then went forth to the grave. The afternoon was dark and stormy, the sky gray, and at intervals snow fell. As we went along, the full body of men's voices sang "*Jerusalem the Golden,*" with an almost unearthly effect. It was a source of devout thankfulness to me to be privileged to be among those who stood beside that grave and there performed the final offices. And then I found a new illustration, and a very touching one, to add to those which had gone to make up the estimate of his character. As the Rev. Dr. JOHNSON read, with a voice trembling with emotion, the solemn words of committal, and with his own hand cast the earth thrice upon the coffin, my eye was caught by an inscription on a monument at the very foot of which the old man was

laid. I cannot accurately recall the words, but they ran somewhat on this fashion: that she who had in former years been buried there, was awaiting the arrival of another whom she had left behind in the world "still struggling with a Christian's hope." I did not understand the words at the time, nor knew that the other had come at last: but that evening, as we went to town in the train together, the Rev. William McVickar told me what it meant: "that is my mother's grave," said he, "and, as long ago as I can remember, my father, after her death, was accustomed to take out a miniature the last thing at night, and kiss it, and place it upon his dressing table; and every morning he would take it up, and again kiss it, and lay it away: he did this, always, for forty years." The light of that faithful love, then for the first time heard of by me, seemed to throw the final glow and lustre upon the life of the venerated man. As we turned from the grave, the students sang again in full, deep chorus, the hymn, "*Who are these in bright array;*" and just then the sun, about to set, reached a low place of clear sky in the west, whence its beams suddenly blazed forth, striking upon the river, and on the distant Kaatskills, and on the church tower, and on the grave. It was a scene never to be forgotten. Glad

of this opportunity to add my own words of respect, affection, and gratitude to those which have already been spoken, I once more second the Motion which has been made.

Other remarks of a very interesting character were made by the Bishop, the Rev. Dr. HAIGHT, the Rev. Dr. OGILBY, and the Rev. Dr. SEYMOUR, including many characteristic and touching reminiscences of the Deceased. Dr. MORGAN'S motion was then adopted.

The REV. DR. HASKINS then moved :—

That the RIGHT REVEREND THE BISHOP OF NEW YORK be requested to prepare and deliver, at some public Service to be appointed by him, in consultation with the Family of the late Dr. McVICKAR, a Sermon in his memory.

Which was carried.

The BISHOP replied that he could not at once pledge himself to comply with the request. There were Presbyters in the Diocese whose intimate acquaintance with the departed reached much farther

back than his own, and this, with other considerations, seemed to him to make it doubtful whether he was the proper person to discharge that interesting and important duty.

The propriety of making the publication of the Proceedings of the Meeting in a less fugitive form than in the columns of the newspapers having been suggested, the SECRETARY, with DR. SEYMOUR, was charged with the duty of publishing the Minutes of the Meeting, the Papers read, and the Remarks made, in a suitable Memorial.

The Meeting then adjourned.

[A true copy of the Minutes.]

SYLVANUS REED,

Secretary of the Meeting.

NEW YORK, *November 16, 1868.*

PROCEEDINGS OF THE TRUSTEES

OF

The Society for Promoting Religion and Learning.

So much of the Report of the Superintendent (the Rev. Dr. SEYMOUR) as relates to the Rev. JOHN McVICKAR, D.D., was ordered by the Trustees of the "Society for Promoting Religion and Learning" at their Annual Meeting, held on the 11th of November, 1868, to be printed, with the Bishop's Remarks, and the Minute adopted by the Clergy of the City of New York, at the expense of the Society.

Extract from the Superintendent's Report.

"Since last we met, our late Superintendent, who served this Society in that office for twenty-six years, has gone to his rest. There is no need to tell this Board of the efficiency, fidelity, wisdom and devotion with which he administered the important trusts

committed to his charge. His continuance in office by consecutive election from year to year for more than a quarter of a century, and until advancing age led him to insist upon his being allowed to relinquish the place, is an abiding proof of the confidence and respect with which he was honored. This office was to him a congenial sphere; its duties were in harmony with the object which, among his many labors of love, he especially set before him as the great aim of his life—the Christian training and education of the young. Here, as Superintendent of the Society for Promoting Religion and Learning in the State of New York, he was enabled, as nowhere else he could, to unite in his official relations the varied interests of sound learning which he represented, and had so much at heart, and speak, as he was wont to do, of Trinity School, Columbia College, the General Theological Seminary, Hobart College, and, in later years, of S. Stephen's College. His Reports, presented and read on such occasions as the present, are preserved in the Minutes of the Proceedings of this Board, and will furnish to those who will come after us, and have not had the advantage of meeting him here, abundant evidence of his deep and thorough knowledge of the theory and principles of Christian Education. We all miss—how greatly!—we miss, our late Superintendent when we

assemble here, as now, for the prosecution of the high and noble work of this Society. Thus will he be missed on earth, where men are doing good, but to say this, is to utter the truest praise, it is to proclaim his fitness for better things in Paradise."

The Rev. Dr. Samuel R. Johnson's Minute.

Forasmuch as it hath pleased Almighty God, in His wise Providence, to take out of this world, ripe in age and full of honors, the Rev. JOHN McVICKAR, D.D., Emeritus Professor in Columbia College, for so many long years charged with the most important interests of this Society as its Superintendent and the Chairman of its Education Committee, conducting its correspondence, and managing its transactions with the numerous applicants and scholars, we desire to put upon record our deep sense of the loss we have sustained, and our high esteem and veneration for his person, his character, and his labors.

Leaving it to others to enlarge upon his excellence as a Christian man and Minister, as a Scholar and Professor, and as distinguished in the Councils, Societies and important Committees of the Church, or upon his intellectual strength and activity, his far-sighted sagacity, his industry, his orthodox and

comprehensive theology, his long and well-directed exertions in City Missionary duties and other active ministerial work, his energy well nigh unabated till near the close: or to describe how devoted he was in all the relations of domestic life,—rich in bountiful affection, compensated ever by most loving returns,—his fine faculty in conversation and discourse, his charitable offerings and doings—we prefer to express ourselves more distinctly in regard to our particular Department of religious Education and culture, in which he was so fitted to excel, and in which he accomplished so much.

Here he was during all his life remarkably efficient. Here with us, his influence was exercised largely and successfully. Wise beyond the age, he brought to bear upon all measures under consideration, both natural skill and a very mature experience. Self-recollected, patient, earnest, he was always ready for our work, waiving private claims and his own preferred studies and pursuits in its behalf. Here his zeal was unflagging, his presence was punctual, and his discussions were full of statesmanlike ability. He took uncommon interest in the youthful scholar, and in encouraging worthy and promising students, and opening the way before them; thus securing many an able scholar for the walks of learning, and

many a devoted minister for the service of the Church, engaging their lasting gratitude and affection. We shall miss him as our courteous friend, as our most judicious counsellor, as our willing and able fellow-laborer!

We give hearty thanks to Almighty God for the good example of this His aged servant, who having finished his course in faith, doth now rest from his labors. Yet we at the same time declare our profound sense of our own loss, and would communicate to his children and relations our true sympathy with them in their bereavement.

The Trustees of the General Theological Seminary.

Resolutions of the Standing Committee of the General Theological Seminary passed at a recent Meeting.

Whereas, since the last Meeting of the Committee, our venerable friend and beloved Associate, the REV. JOHN McVICKAR, D.D., for the period of forty-five years a Trustee of the GENERAL THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY, and for the last forty an active Member of this Committee, has entered into rest, Therefore

Resolved—That this Committee feels bound to depart from its usual custom, and to record, upon its Minutes, its warm appreciation of the faithful and very valuable ser-

vices which he has rendered to the Institution during so long a period, with a punctuality and efficiency which meet our commendation and invite our imitation.

Resolved—That we cannot part with one, with whom the most of us have been so long associated, without testifying not only to the respect and love which he has always commanded by his untiring devotion to the welfare of the Seminary, and of all who were preparing for the Sacred Ministry within its walls, but also to the gentleness of his disposition, the urbanity of his manners, and the never-failing Christian courtesy which has marked his intercourse with us. *

Resolved—That a copy of the foregoing Resolutions be sent to the Family of our late Associate, with the assurance of our sympathy and condolence at the loss they have sustained.



In Memoriam.

REV. JOHN McVICKAR, S.T.D.

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